

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 3676

REMARKS:

Claims 1-11 were pending and considered. In an Office Action designated as "Final" claims 1-11 were rejected. In response, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this Amendment After Final, which includes an amendment to claim 1. Following entry of this Amendment claims 1-11 will remain pending. Entry of the amendment, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,294,393 (Kraus). In response, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the indicated amendment to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant believes that claim 1 recites an invention that is neither taught, disclosed nor suggested by Kraus, and which provides advantages over the prior art.

As stated in written comments in the Office Action, the Examiner interprets Kraus to disclose a substantially watertight grommet comprising a head 15 and an elongated body 12 with a sealing mechanism 20. As clearly shown in the drawings and as described in the specification of Kraus, the connection unit disclosed therein "includes four (4) parts" (column 3, line 32). As illustrated clearly in Figs. 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d of Kraus, a connection element 1 (Fig. 1a) of Kraus functions cooperatively with a three-part structure including a casing component 15 (Fig. 1b), a sealing element 20 (Fig. 1c) and a contact piece 12 (Fig. 1d). Thus, for connection to connection element 1, Kraus teaches a device requiring assembly of three separate components, casing component 15, sealing element 20 and contact piece 12. The four separate, individual components are arranged first in a pre-mounted position shown in Fig. 2 (column 4, lines 11-16), and thereafter compressed together to achieve the final installation position shown in Figs. 3 and 4 (column 4, lines 29-37).

In contrast to the teaching of Kraus, the present invention provides a more simplified construction facilitating attachment and connection, with a single-piece, monolithic grommet and a sealing structure connected to the grommet. The grommet with sealing mechanism functions

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with pin 10 in a two-piece construction, in contrast to the four piece construction taught by Kraus having a three piece grommet and seal.

Thus, in contrast to the teaching of Kraus, claim 1 as amended recites in part:

a head ... an elongate body... defining therethrough a bore ... said head and said body being a single molded piece; ...

a sealing mechanism coupled to the head of the grommet ...

Kraus teaches a device in which three separate components must be assembled to form the grommet before attachment to a pin. Kraus does not teach a grommet having a head and an elongated body being a single molded piece. In fact, the Examiner has identified two separate, distinct and individual pieces in Kraus as being equivalent to the head and body of the present invention. However, the pieces identified by the Examiner are not "a single molded piece" as now recited in claim 1. Further, Kraus does not teach or suggest a sealing mechanism coupled to the head of the grommet as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Kraus does not anticipate claim 1. Further, Kraus includes no teaching to suggest a single piece grommet with a sealing mechanism connected to the grommet head, as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant is of the opinion that claim 1 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious from the teaching of Kraus.

The present invention provides a water-tight grommet forming an effective water-tight seal for the mounting interface of the grommet and the object to which it is attached. The grommet is easy to use and assemble in that the sealing mechanism is connected to the grommet and the grommet is a single-piece structure. Accordingly, Applicant is of the opinion that claim 1 is allowable over the teaching of Kraus.

Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1 and include all of the limitations thereof while adding further specificity to the invention recited therein. Accordingly, claims 2-11 also should be allowed for that reason alone. Additionally, it is respectfully submitted that at least claims 10 and 11 recited additional individual features not taught, disclosed or suggested by Kraus.

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In contrast to the teaching of Kraus, claim 10 recites:

the head of the grommet has at least one part formed therethrough configured for receiving the sealing mechanism overmolded integrally with the head of the grommet.

Applicant respectfully submits that Kraus teaches no such configuration for the head of the grommet and no configuration whereby the sealing element is overmolded integrally with the head of the grommet. Casing component 15 and sealing element 20 are two individual and separate components, not an overmolded structure as recited in claim 10. Accordingly, Kraus does not anticipate the invention recited in claim 10, and includes no suggestion leading one skilled in the art to the construction recited in claim 10. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the invention recited in claim 10 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious from the teaching of Kraus, and respectfully request allowance of claim 10.

In contrast to the teaching of Kraus, claim 11 recites:

the head of the grommet has a bore from an upper surface thereof to an undersurface thereof and the sealing mechanism first and second portions are joined through the bore.

Applicant respectfully submits that Kraus teaches no such configuration wherein the head of the grommet has a bore from an upper surface to an undersurface of the head, and no configuration whereby the sealing mechanism has first and second portions joined through a bore. Accordingly, Kraus does not anticipate the invention recited in claim 11, and includes no suggestion leading one skilled in the art to the construction recited in claim 11. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the invention recited in claim 11 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious from the teaching of Kraus, and respectfully request allowance of claim 11.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests entry of this amendment after the Office Action designated as final, withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

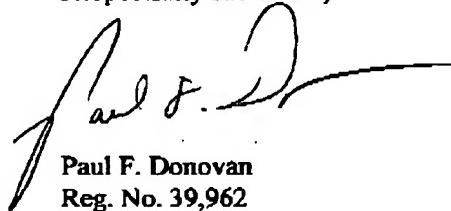
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Alternatively, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this amendment after final for purposes of appeal.

No new matter has been added by way of the amendments and remarks made herein. Reconsideration and allowance of all the remaining pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the event that there are any issues that can be expedited by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul F. Donovan".

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